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# Fitness and Exercise



# Exercise and Fitness

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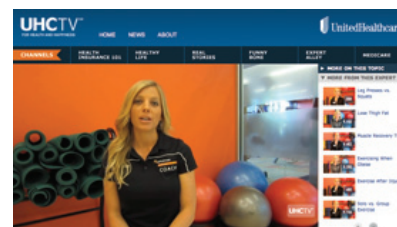
## Are You Drinking Enough Water During Your Workouts?

**If you exercise regularly, it's important to think about how much (and what) you drink. Here are some guidelines to get the most out of your workouts and prevent dehydration.**

If you exercise regularly, it's important to think not only about what you eat, but about how much (and what) you drink. And because exercise speeds up water loss, it's critical to know how to stay properly hydrated.

Water is essential for keeping your body temperature normal. It also cushions your joints and helps get nutrients in and waste out. If you don't drink enough, you can become dehydrated, which will affect your performance. It can make you tired and cause dry mouth, headaches, light-headedness and constipation.

Sodium, chloride and potassium are electrolytes that help your body function normally. Sweating causes you to lose water and electrolytes. Exercising in hot weather can increase that loss. If excessive losses are not replenished, you may feel dizzy or weak. You may even suffer heat exhaustion or heat stroke. These are very serious conditions that require prompt medical attention.



## Video Spotlight:

[How to Eat After a Workout and Still Lose Weight](#)

[Cardiovascular Exercise: Before or After You Lift Weights](#)

## Are You Drinking Enough Water During Your Workouts? *(continued)*

### Fluid guidelines

Experts advise that you drink before, during and after your workout. How much fluid you need depends on several factors:

- How much you sweat
- Your body size, weight and muscle mass
- Heat and humidity conditions
- The intensity of your workout
- Medications you are taking
- Your medical history
- Your age

If you have any medical problems or take any medications, talk to your doctor about your fluid requirements before you start to exercise. Children and the elderly are also more prone to dehydration and will have different fluid requirements during exercise.

Below are some basic guidelines for adults in good health who are not on any medications.

**Before exercise.** Start by drinking fluids several hours before your workout. This will promote a normal fluid and electrolyte balance.

**During exercise,** water is the best fluid for most people. But during high intensity exercise exceeding 45 minutes, sports drinks may be better to help replace carbohydrates and lost electrolytes.

**After exercise,** the goal is to replace any lost fluids and electrolytes.

- Aim to drink within 30 minutes of working out.
- Your fluid replacement needs will be higher after endurance or high intensity activities. Check with your doctor for more information.

### What about other fluids?

During exercise, avoid drinks too high in carbohydrates (sugars). This includes sodas, fruit juices, sweetened ice teas and lemonade. The extra carbs can cause cramping, gas and/or diarrhea. They can also prevent absorption of fluid into the bloodstream.

Look for solutions that have about 6 percent to 8 percent carbohydrate (the amount in most sports drinks). Other considerations:

- Contrary to popular belief, evidence suggests that moderate caffeine intake does not affect exercise or fluid status.
- Alcohol: Avoid alcohol before, during and directly after a workout. It can interfere with muscle recovery and affect your performance.

### Can you drink too much water?

Hyponatremia is a rare yet possibly life-threatening condition that occurs when you drink too much water. It happens when the kidneys can't flush out the excess water. This dilutes the electrolyte content in the blood, which leads to low sodium levels. This is very uncommon, and is mainly seen in endurance athletes, such as marathon runners.

If you find you are not drinking enough fluids for exercise, it's not hard to get into the habit. Increase your intake gradually, and in time you'll easily consume what you need. Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about exercise and hydration.



#### SOURCES:

- American Council on Exercise. Healthy hydration. Accessed: 03/11/2009
- American College of Sports Medicine. American College of Sports Medicine roundtable on hydration and physical activity: consensus statements. Accessed: 07/26/2010
- American Dietetic Association. Position paper: nutrition and athletic performance. Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 2009;109(3):509-527. Accessed: 03/11/2009



# What to Eat Before and After a Workout

**Get the lowdown on the most nutritious ways to fill up before and after exercising.**

You wake up in the morning with just enough time to squeeze in a jog on the treadmill before getting ready for work. You don't even have a spare minute to grab a bite to eat on your way out the door. Besides, you're trying to lose weight and want to make the most of the calories you've just burned. Why "waste" the workout by having breakfast?

The fact is that not eating well can actually make your workouts less effective. Skipping meals can make you feel faint while exercising. Plus, you may be more likely to overeat later.

Eating too much before a workout isn't a good idea either. Your body can't digest a heavy meal while you're being very active. So, how much and what should you eat, and when?

### Find a healthy balance

A well-rounded diet is crucial for staying healthy in general. But it's even more important when you exercise regularly. Extreme diets that limit certain food groups or fat intake don't always give your body the fuel it needs to run well. You need carbohydrates for energy and protein for building muscle, plus a little fat for staying power.

Try to have a serving of carbohydrates, such as whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, fruit, or veggies at every

pre-workout meal and snack. Also include a moderate amount of lean protein. For instance, pair a piece of string cheese with a few whole-wheat crackers or a hard-boiled egg with a small orange.

Note that foods high in fat and fiber don't digest easily and can cause stomach upset during exercise.



### Time it right

You don't want to run on fumes when you exercise. That's why it's important to have a light snack about an hour before you work out. Keep some healthy, convenient foods on hand so you can grab something even if you're short on time. Breakfast smoothies with a protein boost make a quick, nutritious pre-workout snack.

### Be wary of meal replacement bars

Some meal replacement bars aren't much better for you than a candy bar. Look for bars that are low in fat and sugar and have 4 or 5 grams of protein and 25 grams of carbohydrates.

### Make sure you eat enough

A small snack might be enough to tide you over for a 30-minute walk or aerobics class. Have more intense training or a longer workout planned? Add more healthy foods to your pre-workout snack or meal to boost your calorie intake.

### Stay hydrated

It's important to stay well hydrated before, during, and after exercise. Drink 17 to 20 ounces of water 2 hours before you start to exercise. Then drink 7 to 10 ounces of fluid every 10 to 20 minutes during exercise. After your workout, drink 16 to 24 ounces of fluid for every pound of body weight lost after exercise.



### What to Eat Before and After a Workout *(continued)*

#### Replenish yourself afterwards

During a workout you use muscle glycogen stores for energy. Those stores must be replaced for optimal recovery as well as muscle growth and repair. Eating some carbs and protein are the best way to do that.

Try to eat within 1 to 2 hours of a workout to help your body recharge. For a good balance of whole-grain carbs and protein, try these foods:

- A burrito made with a whole-wheat flour tortilla, black beans, reduced-fat cheese, and veggies
- A bowl of instant oatmeal, a cup of skim milk, and a banana
- A bowl of vegetable bean soup
- Whole-wheat pita stuffed with sliced turkey or hummus, lettuce, and tomato

#### SOURCES:

- American Council on Exercise. Healthy hydration. Accessed: 06/08/2011
- American Council on Exercise. Eat well to stay motivated and energized. Accessed: 06/08/2011



## Healthy Hiking Snacks

**Planning a day hike? Make sure to pack the right food and drinks to keep your energy up, muscles fueled and stomach content on the trail.**

Flowers are blooming, birds are singing and mountain trails are calling. Warmer weather seems to invite outdoor trekking.

But don't leave without loading some snacks and drinks in your backpack. Staying properly fueled is an important part of any exercise. And it's not likely you will pass a supermarket on the trails.

#### Nutrition on the go

You'll want to pack foods that are light and won't take up much room in your pack. A soft, insulated lightweight lunch bag works well to keep cold foods cold.

Bring a variety of snacks that offer wholesome carbs, lean proteins and healthy fats. Combining all three nutrients will keep your energy up, your muscles fueled and your stomach happy.

Check out the following ideas for some easy, nutritious suggestions. Happy trails!

#### High carbohydrate

- **Granola bars** are easy to carry and pack. Look for brands with fewer than 10 grams of sugar and at least a couple grams of fiber per bar.
- **Fresh fruit** is good on a day trip. Apples, oranges and firm peaches or plums travel well. Or put fresh firm grapes or cherries in plastic bags.
- **Veggies** such as carrots or celery sticks can be packed in small plastic re-closeable bags.
- **Crackers**, preferably whole-grain, are great vehicles for cheese, or peanut butter.
- **Pretzels, mini rice cakes and tortilla chips** are a good combo of crunch and salt -- and are lightweight, too.
- **Whole-grain breads or pitas** can be paired with hummus, peanut butter or cheese.





### SOURCES:

- American Hiking Society. Suggested trail foods and snacks. Accessed: 06/06/2012
- American Council on Exercise. Camping and hiking trips: best foods to pack for proper nutrition. Accessed: 06/06/2012

## Healthy Hiking Snacks *(continued)*

### Healthy fats

- **Peanut butter** combines protein and fat and is perfect in a sandwich with jelly or sliced banana.
- **Nuts and seeds** are delicious alone or combined in a trail mix with dried fruit. Use plain roasted almonds, cashews, walnuts, sunflower or pumpkin seeds.
- **Whole-grain cereal squares** can be added to trail mixes.
- **Trail mix** can be homemade or purchased. It usually combines dried fruit and nuts, with a little chocolate added in sometimes!

### High protein

- **Beans** (bean dip or hummus) can be packed in small plastic containers and used on a pita or crackers.
- **Low-fat cheese**, such as part-skim string cheese or individually wrapped low-fat cheddar, serves as a good fat and protein source. It can be eaten alone, or used on crackers or pita/bread.
- **Hard-boiled eggs** are little bundles of pure protein that travel well.
- **Nuts** in trail mix provide a source of protein, fat and fiber.
- **Tuna** in pouches (versus cans) can be opened easily on the trail and placed in pita or on crackers.

Avoid snacks that have empty calories with little or no nutritional value, such as potato chips or candy bars. And though you might get a quick pick-me-up, sugary snacks can cause a drop in blood sugar, especially when exercising. Look to enjoy a small sweet treat after your belly has already been filled with a wholesome meal or snack.

### Stay hydrated

Finally, pay strict attention to your fluid needs. Hiking, especially in hot weather, can be dangerous if you are not properly hydrated. Try to drink at least a cup of liquid every 30 minutes or more as needed. Water is your best bet, though some kids may want a sports drink or a juice pack.

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